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SUBJECT: BERMUDA: ENGAGEMENT ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

REF: STATE 124579

¶1. (U) Since the arrival of Hamilton's first female Consul General at post in August, women's groups in Bermuda have been reaching out to the U.S. Consulate. Previously the Consulate had not done much work on women's issues, but the Consulate is now exploring the particular areas of interest identified reftel to determine where we can make the most impact.

¶2. (SBU) The Consulate is meeting with civil society, NGOs, and government representatives, but there are not yet any ongoing programs. The Chamber of Commerce has asked the Consul General to participate in "Wonder Women," a program that addresses local women leaders at the top level of business. The Consul General has also been involved in exploratory discussions with women ministers and other women politicians about programs to increase the number of women in political life. Only three of the Bermuda Government's 11-member cabinet are women, and there are only two women shadow ministers.

¶3. (U) Among other groups reaching out to the Consul General is the Center for Leadership (CFL), an organization focused on fostering better leadership opportunities for women. The CFL works with local and international organizations to expand and promote development opportunities for women, to promote research to advance the development of women and to provide women with opportunities for networking and fostering professional relationships. The Consul General has also been in contact with the International Women's Club-Bermuda (IWC). The IWC is American in concept but international in scope and brings together over 250 members from 18 countries to share common interests.

¶4. (U) The arrival of the first woman Consul General has resonated in Bermuda and thus brings a greater opportunity for the U.S. to become involved in women's issues in Bermuda. We have begun to do that and look forward to increasing engagement on women's issue in the coming months. The CFL has expressed an interest in hosting a speaker on women's issues from the State Department or the U.S. and post requests Department's consideration of possible speakers.

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